

REMARKS

Applicants appreciate the consideration of the present application afforded by the Examiner. Claims 1-4, 6-14 were pending prior to the Office Action. Claim 12 has been canceled through this Reply. Therefore, claims 1-4, 6-11 and 13-14 are pending. Claims 1, 6, 7, and 8 are independent. Favorable reconsideration and allowance of the present application are respectfully requested in view of the following remarks.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants appreciate that claim 12 is indicated to define allowable subject matter. To expedite prosecution, the features indicated as patentable by the Examiner have been introduced into the independent claims through this Reply. More specifically, independent claims 1, 6, 7, and 8 have been amended to include the limitations of claim 12. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that the independent claims are now in condition for allowance. Furthermore, dependent claims 2-4, 9-11, 13, and 14 are considered to be in condition for allowance at least due to their dependence on independent claims 1, 6, 7, and 8, directly or indirectly. Thus, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection of the claims under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) be withdrawn.

Applicants note that the cancellation of claims in this Reply shall not be construed as acquiescence to the grounds of rejection brought forth by the Examiner in the Office Action, and are made merely in the interest of expeditious prosecution. Applicants reserve the right to pursue any canceled limitation in any future continuation application deriving from the instant application.

CONCLUSION

All objections and rejections raised in the Office Action having been addressed, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is in condition for allowance. Notice of same is earnestly solicited.

Should there be any outstanding matters that need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact John R. Sanders (Reg. No. 60,166)

at the telephone number of the undersigned below, to conduct an interview in an effort to expedite prosecution in connection with the present application.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§1.16 or 1.14; particularly, extension of time fees.

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Respectfully submitted,

By

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